

**Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance of Washington, DC  
2014 Questionnaire for D.C. Council Candidates**

**PUBLIC HEALTH**

**1. Will you act to ensure that the District provides transgender-inclusive health insurance to all D.C. Government employees, to include coverage for sex affirmation surgery (also known as sex reassignment surgery)?**

Yes. I support DISB's interpretation of the District's Unfair Insurance Trade Practices Act requiring parity in treatment and coverage for transgender residents, and I further support a policy within the District government that would include sex affirmation surgery for transgender public servants.

**2. Will you support budgets that target funds to address health disparities in the LGBT population, including in mental health and substance abuse treatment?**

Yes. Although LGBT residents have attained a broad spectrum of legal rights over the past several years, legal equality does not immediately translate into social equality. The LGBT population has unique health disparities, and in general, worse health outcomes than heterosexual peers. The LGBT community has lower rates of health insurance coverage compared to other groups and can face a lack of caregiver competency when seeking medical treatment (or fear of seeking treatment out of concern about stigma). To achieve parity in health outcomes, targeted resources are warranted.

**3. Will you support reforming the medical marijuana law and regulations to delete the outdated list of qualifying conditions and rely instead on a physician's diagnosis of medical needs?**

I fully support the District's current medical marijuana program, as I believe in the efficacy of medical marijuana to relieve pain and suffering for those with HIV/AIDS, cancer, and other chronic illnesses. For those residents suffering from chronic pains and diseases, medical marijuana may greatly impact their quality of life and spare them from the side effects of pharmaceuticals. Medical marijuana has the promise of improving the health of countless residents across the city. I will consider the testimony on the subject of reforming the law and look at best practices from other states.

**4. Describe steps you will take to improve performance at the HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, STD, and TB Administration (HAHSTA), including in HIV prevention, HIV/AIDS surveillance, and mental health services.**

The city has made important strides in addressing the problem of STI's and STD's, increasing the number of individuals tested and passing out condoms to those who are at risk. However, there is more work to be done.

I remain committed to allocating sufficient resources for prevention efforts like needle exchange programs, culturally competent education and outreach programs, and condom distribution, to name a few. Although I do not sit on the Health Committee, I will continue to be supportive of allocating the appropriate resources to HAHSTA so that our government takes the best approach to reduce the transmission and provide care and treatment to persons with the diseases.

## **JUDICIARY AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

**5. Will you press for increased oversight of the Metropolitan Police Department's gathering and analysis of crime statistics to ensure greater comprehensiveness and objectivity, including transgender-related hate crime data?**

Yes, I would support increased oversight of MPD's gathering and analysis of crime statistics. Hate crimes data allows MPD to allocate resources in a manner that prevents future incidents and to proactively deal with pockets of escalating tension. We must always be vigilant that MPD is appropriately responding to, investigating, and collecting data about bias-motivated incidents. I am encouraged by the outreach efforts of MPD's Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit and its collaboration with GLOV and the DC Center - we need to utilize this expertise in a wider effort to protect our LGBT citizens. All MPD officers must be adequately trained and competently able to respond to and investigate bias-motivated crimes.

Since taking office, I have proactively engaged public safety agencies and community activists to raise awareness on hate crimes. I have joined residents in rallies against recent violent attacks appearing to be hate crimes in Eckington and the Metropolitan Branch Trail. As Chair of the Committee which has oversight of the Office of GLBT Affairs, I will continue to seek ways to improve our city's response to suspected hate crimes. As a legislator, I will continue to make certain that MPD has the resources necessary to ensure that hate crimes are thoroughly investigated and suspects are properly charged.

**6. What will you do to provide alternatives to incarceration for marginalized and at-risk populations like homeless youth and transgender people who resort to sex work for survival?**

My staff is currently working on a vacatur statute to provide a means by which victims of trafficking could vacate and expunge convictions for criminal offenses that occurred as a result of being a victim of human trafficking. Sex trafficking victims often are often forced to engage in prostitution, but are not always identified as victims. As a result, at-risk populations acquire records that inhibit the ability of these victims to obtain certain jobs or go to school as a result of the stigma. We can help at-risk populations by addressing convictions for prostitution-related offenses for victims of human trafficking.

**7. Will you support funding to hire qualified trainers to provide LGBT-inclusive cultural competency training to all police officers, including in the handling of intimate partner violence?**

Yes. I will support funding for LGBT-inclusive cultural competency training and same-sex IPV response training. Training of this nature should be specifically budgeted, as MPD officers must be equipped with the training necessary to skillfully handle matters affecting all members of our community.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS**

**8. Will you insist that anyone appointed as Director of the Office of Human Rights be required to have professional training and experience in civil rights law enforcement?**

It would be ideal if the Director of the Office of Human Rights has a background in civil rights law enforcement. However, there may be candidates who have not dealt specifically with enforcement who nevertheless are qualified based on other relevant professional experience, and/or who have a degree in closely related fields of study. I believe these individuals should be considered as well. Ultimately, appointment to this critical position should be based on a candidate's experience and qualifications.

**9. Given the limited results from trans-inclusive Project Empowerment training, will you push to establish a project at the Department of Employment Services to increase government hiring from under-represented populations, including the chronically underemployed trans population?**

Yes. I am aware that the trans-population faces chronic underemployment and that trans-individuals may be subject to employment discrimination. I was pleased to see that Project Empowerment was tailored to trans-individuals, but I believe there is more that can be done. I would be pleased to work with GLAA and other advocates on a plan to focus on hiring under-represented populations.

## **YOUTH AND SENIORS**

### **10. Will you support improved services and treatment for LGBT homeless youth and seniors, including transitional housing?**

The needs of LGBTQ homeless youth are unique, which is why I co-sponsored the LGBTQ Homeless Youth Reform Act of 2013 (and 2012). It is critical that we put in place competency training for homeless service providers and collect data specifically on LGBTQ homelessness. LGBTQ youth are disproportionately represented in the homeless population, and to address this problem, the full spectrum of housing services should be tailored to reach LGBTQ youth.

## **CONSUMERS AND BUSINESSES**

### **11. Will you support strengthening Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) reforms by eliminating license protests filed by citizens associations and ad hoc groups, requiring stakeholders to participate in the community process provided by the Advisory Neighborhood Commission?**

Advisory Neighborhood Commissions and civic associations are residents' first line of defense, in terms of government services, which I personally value as an elected official and former president of a civic association. Their positions are given great weight because they, without compensation, host community meetings, provide input, and vote on issues that impact immediate residents on numerous issues, including alcohol licenses. I will consider the testimony of residents and community stakeholders on this topic.

### **12. Will you defend the right of adults in the District to choose adult-oriented entertainment for themselves, and the right of appropriately licensed and zoned businesses to provide it?**

I believe that what people do in their private lives is their business (assuming they are abiding by the law). As Councilmember for Ward 5, I have passed bills ensuring that adult-oriented businesses, and in particular nude dancing establishments, are not concentrated in any one ward. I will continue to legislate on behalf of the residents of Ward 5 and strike a balance so that no neighborhood is inundated with business establishments that raise concerns my residents immediately impacted.

**Your record is part of your rating. Please list any actions that you have taken that may help illustrate your record on behalf of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. Your answers should be typed on separate paper rather than on this form. *You must sign your name on each answer sheet to indicate your personal commitment to your answers.***

**Please return your signed questionnaire responses by Thursday, February 6 to GLAA, P.O. Box 75265, Washington, D.C. 20013. In addition to sending your signed hard copy, please email a copy (in any major word processor or text format) for loading on GLAA's website ([www.glaa.org](http://www.glaa.org)) to [equal@glaa.org](mailto:equal@glaa.org). Thank you.**

**Please list any any actions that you have taken that may help illustrate your record on behalf of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people.**

It is worth noting that I publicly supported marriage equality as a candidate in 2010 and 2012. I am a member of the Human Rights Campaign and Gertrude Stein Democratic Club. As a former trial attorney for the Civil Rights Division of the US Department of Justice, I investigated nursing homes, prisons, jails and juvenile justice facilities around the country to ensure that the conditions meet the standards required by our Constitution. One of the most important issues we faced at the DOJ was protecting inmates from harm, particularly LGBT inmates who were being sexually assaulted. These attacks underscore the importance of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) enforcement across the country.

As a former advisor to the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice, I worked with the Mayor's Office of GLBT Affairs, MPD, and GLOV to address the violent attacks against transgender residents. I also worked with the Office of GLBT Affairs and MPD to coordinate the One City Summer Fun in summer 2011, which was focused on providing our youth, particularly members of the LGBT community, with constructive activities and events happening around the city rather than congregating in Gallery Place.

Each campaign I have run, and indeed my current Council staff, represents all of Ward 5, including staff members and core volunteers from the LGBT community. As a member of the Council, I have developed a strong voting record in support of the LGBTQ community. My office worked closely with the DC Trans Coalition on drafting and negotiating the Deoni Jones Birth Certificate Equality Amendment Act of 2013, which went into effect a few months ago, making it much easier for transgender residents to obtain a new birth certificate reflecting the appropriate gender. The law also makes it less burdensome to change one's legal name. I am pleased to have had the opportunity to so positively contribute to the lives of DC's trans community, and I look forward to future opportunities to work together.

Among other bills in which GLAA may have an interest, I co-sponsored the LGBTQ Homeless Youth Reform Act of 2013 (and 2012), voted in favor of the Marriage Officiant Amendment Act of 2013. I also co-sponsored and actively support the passage of the "Conversion Therapy for Minors Prohibition Amendment Act of 2013."

As you may know, as the Chair of the Committee on Government Operations, my committee has oversight over the Office of GLBT Affairs and the Advisory Committee to the Office of GLBT Affairs. I look forward to working with GLAA as I exercise my oversight responsibilities over these offices and in my legislative capacity on the Council. I am honored to work side-by-side with members of the LGBT community to ensure that all of our residents' concerns are voiced and represented.